

# Heartbeat Sutra

Jerod Sommerfeldt

# Heartbeat Sutra

for two instruments and video

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“Oh, Sariputra, Form Does not Differ From the Void,  
And the Void Does Not Differ From Form.  
Form is Void and Void is Form.  
The Same is True For Feelings,  
Perceptions, Volitions and Consciousness.”

from the Heart Sutra

Personnel needed:

1. Two performers on instruments related to the treble clef and bass clef, respectively.
2. An engineer to run sound and video, maintaining acoustic balance between the electronics track and live performers.
3. Stage personnel to completely darken the hall at the beginning of the piece and return the lights to full at its conclusion.

Materials needed:

1. A projector, screen, and PA equipment (speakers, mixer, laptop) to facilitate stereo playback of a .mp4 file, supplied by the composer.
2. Two stethoscopes or heart rate monitors and two chronometers for the performers to track individual heart beats and overall time.
3. Stand lights for each music stand.

Performance considerations:

Each system of music – written in concert pitch – lasts for 30" in duration, thus each page in the score lasts for a total of 1'. A chronometer should be used to keep pace with the video and music, which have only a vague, indirect correlation to any gestures written in the instrumental parts. Counting silently is a preferred substitute, should following along with heart beats through a stethoscope be impossible.

Given that both internal heart beats are used for individual parts and systems of music last for 30", there will be intentional fluctuations of timing for each player in relation to the other. Players should feel free to complete the piece at their own pace, provided that 4' remains a goal for total duration.

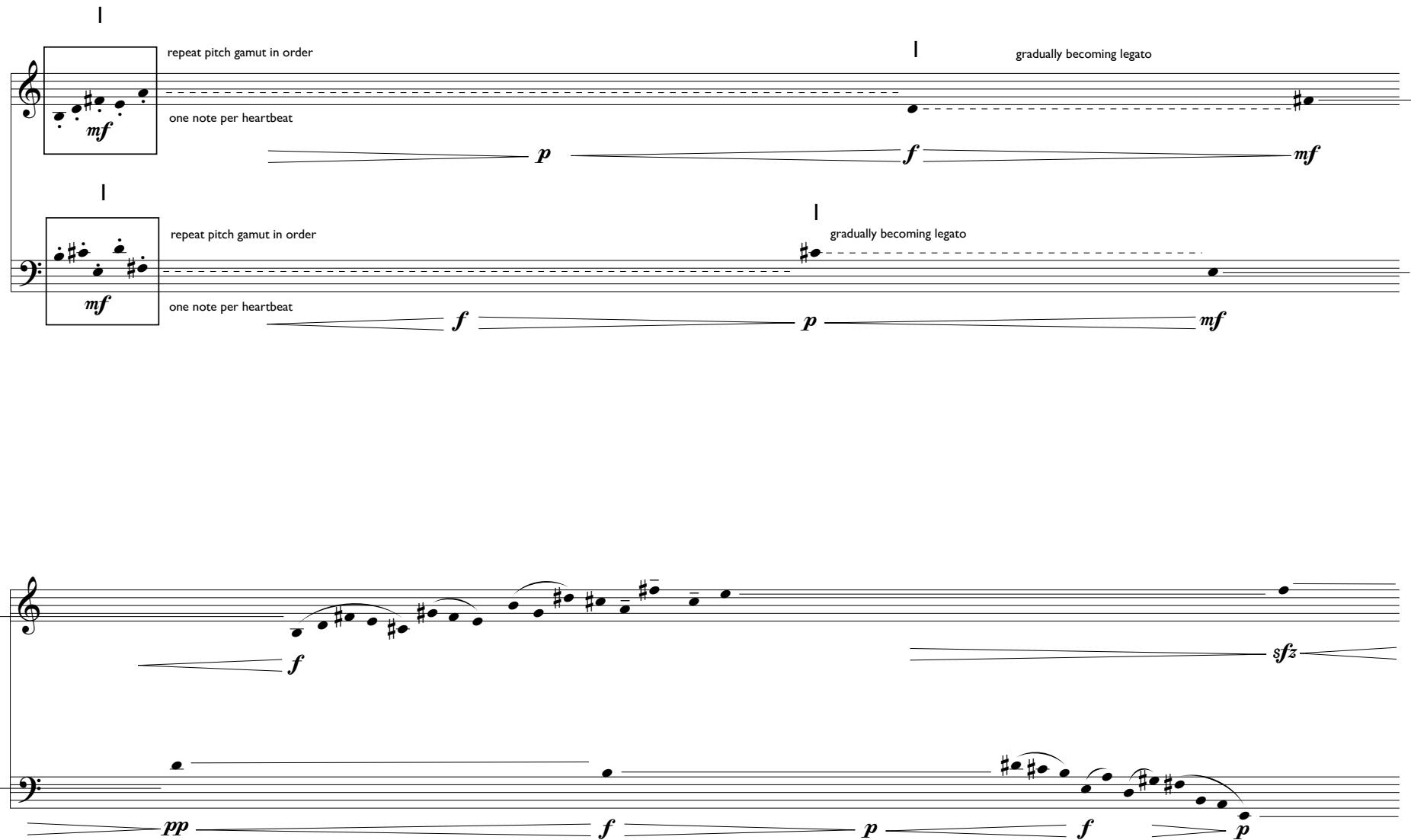
The video lasts longer than the prescribed 4', and will fade out at 4'05". If the performers are not yet finished with the piece at that time, the piece will conclude by them in total darkness.

Notational considerations:

Numerals placed above note heads denote the number of heart beats to pulse or sustain for each respective note. Notes with dashed lines following them call for individual, repeated articulations in accordance with the prescribed number of heart beats and notes with solid lines that follow indicate sustained pitches, held for the called-for number of heart beats. Some moments in the score specifically call for freely changing octaves, but performers are welcomed to play any written pitch in any octave that they choose, especially those that are an octave below where written.

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repeat pitch gamut in order

one note per heartbeat

*p*

*f*

*mf*

gradually becoming legato

repeat pitch gamut in order

one note per heartbeat

*f*

*p*

*mf*

*#*

gradually becoming legato

*f*

*p*

*mf*

*f*

*pp*

*f*

*p*

*f*

*p*

*sfz*

This musical score for 'Heartbeat Sutra' consists of three staves of music. The top staff is in treble clef, the middle in bass clef, and the bottom in bass clef. Each staff begins with a box containing a sequence of notes and dynamics: 'repeat pitch gamut in order' followed by 'one note per heartbeat'. The first staff starts with a dynamic of *mf*. The second staff starts with a dynamic of *mf*. The third staff starts with a dynamic of *#*. The music then transitions to a section where each staff has a dynamic of *f*, followed by *p*, and then *mf*. The top staff ends with a dynamic of *f*. The middle staff ends with a dynamic of *sfz*. The bottom staff ends with a dynamic of *p*. The score includes various dynamics such as *p*, *f*, *mf*, *pp*, and *#*, and performance instructions like 'repeat pitch gamut in order' and 'one note per heartbeat'.

3                    5

*mp*                    *f*                    *pp*                    *fp*                    *mf*

3                    freely switch octaves

*mf*                    *ff*                    *p*

2

freely choose from pitch gamut

*mf*                    *p*

6

*mf*                    *f*                    *p*                    *mf*

5

8

*mf*

*f* *p*

5

8

1

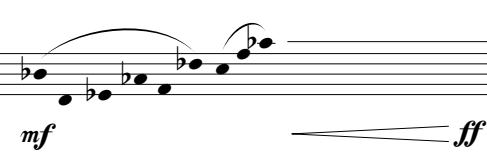
*pp* *mf*

*f* *p*

*mp*

1

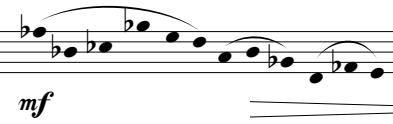
*pp*



*ff*

2

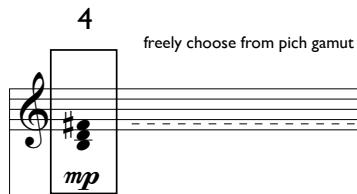
*pp*



*p*

4

freely choose from pitch gamut



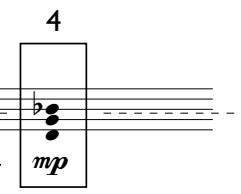
*mp*

5



*f*

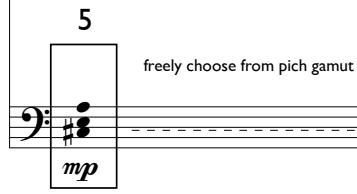
4



*mp*

5

freely choose from pitch gamut



*mp*

3



*f*

*p*

8



*p*

10



*p*

4



*mp*